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FACE VALIDITY IN ESP: A QUANTITATIVE STUDENT VALIDATION OF AN ENGINEERING ESP APPROACH

Abstract

This study sought to test Engineering students' responses to an English for Specific Purposes (ESP) module at a South African university, since Engineering students typically viewed ESP modules negatively. A self-designed questionnaire with two 15-item and three 9-item Likert-type scales were used to gather quantitative data in a predominantly survey research design. The questionnaire was administered on Engineering students (N=226) at the end of the semester after they had attended the ESP module. The questionnaire data were processed with SPSS, and analysed with means, Chi Square, ANOVA, and Games Howell and Scheffe post hoc tests. The responses were evaluated as negative or positive, on the basis of consistency with ESP principles, and relevant education theory. The findings revealed that two-thirds (10) of the item means were indicative of a high degree of face validity on relaxed criteria, while a third (5) signified a low degree of face validity. On much stricter criteria, the ratio changed to 58:42, still in favour of a high degree of face validity. In spite of the high degree of face validity (relevance and usefulness), it appeared as if the respondents still had lingering doubts about the inclusion of English Communication Skills modules in Engineering learning programmes.

Key words

ESP, Engineering, curriculum design, face validity, attitude, motivation.

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